

Additions to the known avifauna of the Rwenzori Mountains National Park in western Uganda

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The Rwenzori Mountains National Park (RMNP, 0°06'–0°46' N, 29°47'–30°11' E; Fig. 1) in western Uganda was created in 1991, and made a World Heritage Site in 1994. There have been a number of bird surveys in the Rwenzoris, although coverage has been patchy (Ogilvie-Grant 1910, Van Someren & Van Someren 1949, Weekes 1949a, 1949b, Buckley *et al.* 1989, Howard 1991, Francis & Penford 1991, Howard *et al.* 1996, Roy *et al.* 1997, Willard *et al.* 1998, Dehn & Christiansen 1998). Two recent publications list the bird species recorded there (Wilson 1995, Howard *et al.* 1996). The RMNP has fewer species of birds than other forests in western Uganda (Butynski & Kalina 1993, Wilson 1995, Howard *et al.* 1996). In part this might be because surveys are incomplete, or because of the almost complete deforestation of the lower slopes (below 2000 m in Bundibugyo District and below 1800 m in Kasese District). This effectively isolates the montane forest from the surrounding, species-rich lowland forest.

From July to August 1996, assisted by Eric Sande from Makerere University, we conducted four single-day surveys (at Harugali, Ngiti, Kagugu and Kakuka), and one twelve-day survey (at Kakuka) in Bundibugyo District. From August to December 1996, we worked for a total of 111 days along the Mubuku River system (Kasese District). Using visual and vocal observation and mist-netting, we recorded 139 species of birds in RMNP. The mist-net effort was 28,200 net metre-hours, and 911 individuals of 60 species were captured. At least one member of all species mist-netted was photographed and a blood-sample taken for DNA analysis.

Below, we give details of 17 species for which we find no previous published records in the RMNP (Ogilvie-Grant 1910, Buckley *et al.* 1989, Francis & Penford 1991, Wilson 1995, Howard *et al.* 1996, Willard *et al.* 1998).

Additions to the Rwenzori Mountains National Park bird list

The species number, sequence and nomenclature follow Ornithological Subcommittee (1996). All dates refer to the year 1996.

55 *Ciconia abdimii* **Abdim's Stork** Four birds were seen gliding (eastwards) high over the montane forest by the Nyabitaba Hut, Mubuku Valley, 2650 m, 11 November.

- 117 *Polyboroides typus* **African Harrier-Hawk** Seen frequently (> 10 times) in the Mubuku Valley, 1800 m to 2400 m, between September and October. One bird was seen at 2100 m carrying twigs and branches, presumably for nest-building.
- 133 *Accipiter rufiventris* **Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk** An individual distinguishable by the damaged primaries on its left wing was observed on several occasions at 2700 m in the Mubuku Valley from 5–9 November. The bird was seen hunting low over the forest canopy, and was also observed perched in the top of a tree in the *Podocarpus-Arundinaria* transitional zone. Two birds of this species were observed calling at 2720 m on 5 November.
- 144 *Gypohierax angolensis* **Palm-nut Vulture** One immature bird was seen flying into the Mubuku Valley at 1800 m on 15 September.
- 158 *Polemaetus bellicosus* **Martial Eagle** One adult bird was seen in the Mubuku Valley at 2400 m on 20 October. The bird was soaring the slopes for thermals and glided off in a south-eastern direction towards the town of Hima.
- 442 *Glaucidium tephronotum* **Red-chested Owlet** One adult bird was mist-netted in *Symphonia globulifera* forest in the Mubuku Valley at 2100 m on 28 September. This sub-species, *medje*, has chestnut-red flanks and a white chest with black streaks, and is only found in the Albertine Rift Mountains.
- 477 *Apus caffer* **White-rumped Swift** Observed flying over our camp at Kakuka at 1970 m on 5 August.
- 668 *Hirundo fuligula* **Rock Martin** Seen at the edge of the montane forest at Kakuka at 1970 m on 27 July (ten), 3 August (two) and 5 August (five).
- 710 *Phyllastrephus hypochloris* **Toro Olive Greenbul** Fourteen captured in total, on the Kakuka Ridge, 1930–1975 m, in July and August, and in the Mubuku Valley, 1800–2400 m, in September and October.
- 761 *Sheppardia aequatorialis* **Equatorial Akalat** Two captured on the Kakuka Ridge at 1970 m, on 4 August (one adult) and 7 August (one immature).
- 766 *Sheppardia polioptera* **Grey-winged Robin** One captured in the Mubuku Valley at 1800 m on 10 September. This species was seen and heard daily inside the forest.
- 924 *Prinia subflava* **Tawny-flanked Prinia** Two observed in the secondary scrub at the Kakuka Ridge at 1950 m on 29 July.
- 936 *Apalis flavida* **Yellow-breasted Apalis** One adult captured in degraded secondary forest on the Kakuka Ridge at 2030 m on 5 August. One also observed at the forest edge in the Mubuku Valley at 1800 m on 3 September.
- 1004 *Trochocercus cyanomelas* **Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher** Two immature birds captured, one in secondary forest on the Kakuka Ridge at

Figure 1. Sketch map showing the park boundary (thin line) and the border (thick line) between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

1980 m on 2 August, and one in primary forest in the Mubuku Valley at 1800 m on 12 September.

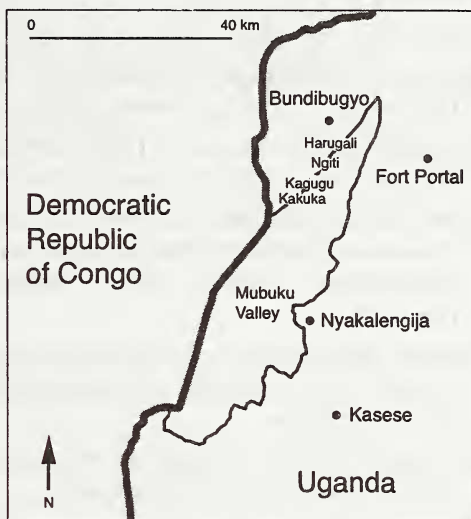
1076 *Campephaga flava* Black Cuckoo-shrike Several adults were seen perched and foraging in the canopy of trees at the Mubuku grass-forest ecotone, at 1800 m, between 30 August and 7 September.

1209 *Ploceus nigricollis* Black-necked Weaver Observed daily in trees at the grass-forest ecotone in the Mubuku Valley at 1800 m between August and September. This record apparently constitutes an upward altitudinal range extension of 300 m (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1970, Britton 1980).

1349 *Linurgus olivaceus* Oriole Finch Two male birds observed in the canopy of the forest in the Mubuku Valley at 1800 m on 19 September.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was part of our MSc dissertation at the Centre for Tropical Biodiversity, Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. We are grateful to Eric Sande, Bonyface Enkaryawa, Chief Game Warden Chris Oryema and the staff of the Rwenzori Mountains National Park Headquarters, James J. Schellenger and Edwin Bagyengye from WWF Kasese-Fort Portal, Miriam van Heist (MUIENR), Jan Dehn, Ifticar Hussein, Jon Fjeldså, Carsten Rahbek, Louis A. Hansen, Bent Otto Poulsen, Lars Dinesen, Jan Bolding Kristensen, Tammes Menne, Neil D. Burgess, Jorgen Rabol, Sanne Bové, Mike Roy, Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire, Christianso Fuglestation and Flemming Pagh Jensen, who all provided their kind assistance. We are also grateful to Derek Pomeroy and Margaret Carswell for corrections and comments on this manuscript. We thank the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and the Uganda Wildlife Authority for permission to carry out fieldwork in the RMNP. Our field studies were supported by the following grants: Det Naturvidenskabelige Fakultets Rejsestipendium, Københavns Almene Fond, Hotelejer Anders Mansson og hustru Hanne Mansson's legat, Frimodt-Heineke Fonden, Fonden Kjebi, Dehn family and Christiansen family. The expenses of our Ugandan counterpart were covered by the ENRECA programme under DANIDA.



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